

JAMES EVANS DAVIS

The career of James Evans Davis stands as the epitome of what, given immense ability and equal dedication, a practicing physician may hope to accomplish in a lifetime. His election to the presidency of the American Medical Association, rather than proving this, merely underlines it. When he takes office next month this Goldsboro native will be the first physician from this state to have headed the nation's largest medical organization.

Following an undergraduate career here verging on the legendary -- he was President of the Student Body in 1939-40, championship miler on the track team (and setter of a record in that event which lasted for twenty-eight years), and winner of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award for selfless leadership -- he completed the two year medical course then available at Chapel Hill and took his M.D. degree at the University of Pennsylvania. After residencies and an instructorship in New York, he settled in Durham in 1951, and has practiced surgery there ever since, as well as holding clinical professorships here and at Duke. His distinctive achievements include pioneering the advancement of the ambulatory clinic concept and providing the initial impetus behind the foundation of Medical Mutual Insurance Company of North Carolina during the liability insurance crisis of 1975. He has been president of three statewide medical associations as well as of the Durham Chamber of Commerce and of both the Medical Alumni and General Alumni Associations of this University. His rise to prominence in the American Medical Association began with the Vice Speakership of its House of Delegates in 1981 and continued with the Speakership three years later.

His leadership in adapting the health care system to the changing circumstances of our times has resulted in better medical care being available to the people of North Carolina. A faithful servant of his native state, of his church, of his Alma Mater, and above all of the thousands of patients whom he has treated, James Davis is an outstanding specimen of the complete physician, one we delight to recognize with this degree of Doctor of Science.